

SES10-2010-000093

Abstract for an Invited Paper
for the SES10 Meeting of
the American Physical Society

Decoding the Assessment Alphabet Soup

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The number of assessment instruments that help physics instructors evaluate the conceptual learning of their students has grown over the last twenty years. Today, the number of tests that are available begin to look like an alphabet soup, FCI, MBT, TUG-K, CSE, CSM, CSEM, DIRECT, BEMA, LOCE, FMCE, SEMCO, etc. What can these assessment tests do for you that is different from what you regularly do? How do these tests differ from the tests and other assessments you already give in class? What is meant by formative and summative assessment and why should you care? What are some of the issues associated with giving one of these assessment tests? These are the questions that will be addressed in this talk.